

thank President Biden for finally delivering on something that previous administrations have tried to do but have been unable to complete.

BUILD BACK BETTER AGENDA

Mr. President, make no mistake, we will keep going in the weeks ahead by passing the rest of President Biden's Build Back Better agenda.

It is very simple. If we want to create more jobs, if we want to fight inflation, if we want to help families lower costs, the best thing we can do is pass Build Back Better.

Let me repeat that. Want to fight inflation? Support Build Back Better.

For all of 2021, we have seen a historic and unprecedented economic recovery compared to where we were at the depths of the COVID crisis. But there is no denying that, as our recovery continues, we must work to address supply chain troubles that have exacerbated inflation in recent months.

Build Back Better is exactly what the doctor ordered. No fewer than 17 Nobel Prize-winning economists and economists across the political spectrum have said repeatedly that Build Back Better and infrastructure together will reduce—reduce—inflationary pressures.

In just, I think it was, this morning's Washington Post, Larry Summers, one of the inflation hawks in this country, recommended passing Build Back Better as a way to reduce inflation.

The childcare investments alone will save parents thousands of dollars a year. Right now, families pay an average of \$10,000 annually on childcare for each kid under 4. Many pay more than that. That is a backbreaking expense that too many families—the majority—simply cannot afford.

Build Back Better will provide the largest investment in childcare ever. Extending the childcare tax credit will help parents save on things like diapers and groceries and gasoline.

And, of course, Build Back Better will finally empower Medicare to directly negotiate drug prices in Part B and Part D, lowering costs for millions of seniors and American families. On insulin alone, our plan would make it so that Americans with diabetes won't pay more than \$35 a month for insulin.

Mr. President, none of the things I am talking about are luxuries; none are handouts. They are daily essentials that families need to thrive and which, over the years, have grown expensive.

And America is behind this. In every poll you see, they are for of all these things.

Why will not a single Republican vote for it? Why will not a single Republican vote to reduce insulin costs to \$35, not a single Republican vote to help Americans with childcare, not a single Republican vote for the best way to reduce inflation, even though they talk about it a lot?

It is profoundly disappointing to see our Republican colleagues more focused on exploiting problems faced by the American people. Just recently, my

colleague, the junior Senator from Florida, told Americans precisely how he feels about the rising costs, inflation costs, faced by families. His quote: "[It] is a gold mine for us." It is a gold mine; that is what the Republican junior Senator from Florida said.

How cynical, how low, how wildly out of touch is that?

The same Republicans who spent years under Donald Trump cutting taxes for the wealthy are now opposing relief for the middle class and cheering for costs to go up. I hope the American people remember that. Democrats are fighting to pass legislation to lower costs. Republicans, on the other hand, think inflation is "a gold mine" for them and are rooting for prices to go up. These are the same partisan, short-sighted games that have frustrated American families, who have increasingly wondered who in government is looking out for them.

Well, yesterday, Americans got to see one shining example of what can happen when elected officials do look out for them. Build Back Better is another opportunity to do the same, and we will not let up until we pass Build Back Better and keep our promise to recapture that sunny American optimism that has long been the key to our success.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. President, finally, on NDAA, last night, I took the first procedural step for the Senate to begin consideration of our annual national defense bill.

Republicans have repeatedly said this legislation is urgent and needs to be taken up immediately. We have heard them say that. They have signed letters about it. With their cooperation, the Senate can start voting as early as today. We are ready to do that, and I hope Republicans can join in moving this legislation forward quickly.

This year, it is my hope and intention to add to the NDAA the bipartisan legislation the Senate passed earlier this year to boost American manufacturing, scientific research and innovation, and U.S. competitiveness.

The U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, USICA—formerly known as the Endless Frontier Act, which I championed with Senator YOUNG and with great help from so many; among them, Senator CANTWELL—would be one of the largest Federal investments in science, technology, and manufacturing in decades. It is an urgent and necessary step that will put more Americans to work in every corner of the country. It will fight inflation and relieve overburdened supply chains.

Talking about supply chains, pass USICA. Nothing will do more over the next few years to reduce supply chain problems than this bill, and especially in the semiconductor industry.

The chip shortage is not some abstract issue; it is impacting the daily lives of Americans. Cars, refrigerators, and other household appliances require chips. Supply shortages mean Americans are left waiting a long time for

these essentials. We have legislation ready to go to fix this major chip crisis. Addressing this crisis cannot wait.

A generation ago, we used to produce about a third of the world's chip supply. Now fewer than 12 percent are made in America while other countries have lapped us, particularly China. This hurts American workers, American consumers, American national security.

We should pass USICA this year—and it is a bipartisan bill—so we can strengthen domestic chip production and drive new investment in the industry to help address this shortage. If we can pass the defense bill with USICA language included, I am hopeful that we will be able to work with the Speaker and our House colleagues to find a way to get this legislation enacted before the end of the year.

Once again, before I yield the floor, my kudos, accolades, fondness, and love to the great Senator from Vermont, who will now speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). The Senator from Vermont.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished majority leader for his comments. He and I have been friends for decades. I also acknowledge the distinguished Secretary of the Senate, who is here this morning.

Mr. President, eight times the voters of Vermont—who are my neighbors, my friends, my family—have had the great faith to send me to the U.S. Senate to represent them. Yesterday, I told those neighbors and friends and my family that I would not run for reelection.

I told the Vermonters who have humbled me since my first election to the Senate in 1974 that I will leave this seat at the conclusion of my term. It is a decision I do not come to lightly but one in which Marcelle and I find great peace.

In the last nearly 47 years, the Senate has become a family to both Marcelle and me. Here we found friends, some of the best of friends, and relationships that will and have lasted a lifetime. But the Senate has always been where I have come to fight for Vermont, a State that has been my home since birth, the place where I met Marcelle, where we started our family, and to which in early 2023, we will return for good. It is time to go home.

Here is the thing about the Senate. Here is where small States like Vermont have not just a seat at the table but a voice at the table. For decades, I have been privileged to fight for Vermont, from the small grown-in-Vermont ideas like the revitalization of our historic downtowns to farm to school programs, to organic farming—all of which started small and have become increasingly popular across the country—and to Vermont's trailblazing approach to criminal justice reforms and victim advocacy, to taking Vermonters' outward view that our great Green Mountain State is open and welcome to anyone, including